

**CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT**

ENDC/PV.304
13 June 1967
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FOURTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 13 June 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

OCT 25 1967

DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

Chairman: Mr. H. KHALLAF (United Arab Republic)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A.F. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. T. DAMIANOV
Mr. D. KOSTOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG
U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. S.F. RAE
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE
Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. E. FRANCO
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTANEDA
Miss E. AGUIRRE
Mr. F. CORREA

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO
Mr. B.O. TONWE

Poland:

Mr. M. BLUSZTAJN
Mr. J. GOLDBLAT
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. A. COROIANU
Mr. M. BUHOARA

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. V.P. SUSLOV
Mr. R.M. TIMERBAIEV
Mr. I.M. PALENYKH

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF
Mr. A. OSMAN
Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. A.A. SALAM

United Kingdom:

Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. G. BUNN
Mr. C.G. BREAM
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (United Arab Republic): I declare open the three hundred and fourth plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.
2. Mr. CASTANEDA (Mexico) (translation from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico has some hesitation in taking part in the debate at this stage. We had intended to do so after the United States and the Soviet Union had submitted to the Committee a joint text for the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Seeing with concern that days go by without the expected announcement, we have thought to add our opinion to that of other members concerning the problems raised by the drafting of the treaty, and to express also our hope that an agreement may soon be reached.
3. We are discouraged to observe that some of the problems still pending seemed to have been resolved months ago and that, with the passing of time, new difficulties have arisen. We have the impression that further obstacles are imminent and that time is not on our side. As we see receding from us a goal which, perhaps because of a flaw in our perspective, we thought to be nearer, we are assailed by the feeling that an historic opportunity may be lost and that if we allow it to go by, it may be a long time before a favourable wind begins to blow again.
4. We believe that no treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons that could be signed, or even conceived, would satisfy everybody. By its very nature, by its fundamentally negative character of prohibition, any treaty of this kind must necessarily give the impression of being incomplete, imperfect; and, in view of the unavoidable realities of the world of today, any non-proliferation treaty will necessarily affect some more than others and require more of some than of others, for which reason it could not fail to contain some elements of inequity and of discrimination. This is certain and one can only admit it.
5. But it is equally certain, or even more so, that, unless a radical change comes about in the international situation, either the non-proliferation treaty will be concluded with all its limitations and inevitable shortcomings, or all reasonable possibility of stopping the arms race and making progress towards general and complete disarmament will be removed for ever. The non-proliferation treaty is only one step on the long road to disarmament. But it is a necessary step. If it is not taken, this road will not be travelled. And if it is not taken soon, within a short time this road will be closed.

(Mr. Castañeda Mexico)

6. That is why we believe that a concrete draft treaty must be judged not only on its intrinsic merits, but also by taking into account the alternatives that remain open. In our view the alternative of a world without restrictions in this regard, where nuclear weapons and nuclear States proliferate, represents the surest way of never attaining precisely the objectives pursued by the non-aligned countries, by the countries which do not have nuclear weapons.

7. The non-proliferation treaty aims at preventing the multiplication of future risks of nuclear war rather than at eliminating the existing ones. But this objective, although limited, is important and valuable. The non-proliferation of nuclear States in itself, even if it is not accompanied by any complement, is a vital need, which cannot be postponed, of the contemporary world. It is acknowledged that one of the greatest dangers to peace-- even greater perhaps than a direct confrontation between the big nuclear Powers-- would be that other smaller countries, if they came to have a nuclear potential, however small, would be able to undertake an action which very soon would inevitably involve the great Powers and unleash a general atomic war. Hence it is an essential imperative to avert this danger, although obviously that will not eliminate all risk of nuclear war, since the possibility of a direct confrontation between the big nuclear Powers will remain.

8. In other words, the obligations which the non-nuclear Powers would assume under a non-proliferation treaty are obligations that have in themselves their own justification, that is, they are indispensable and valuable in themselves and not only as obligations which compensate and reciprocate those assumed by the nuclear Powers. That is how the treaty was originally conceived. It was always considered to be desirable in itself that the States which did not have nuclear weapons should refrain from acquiring them. The best proof of this is that the initiators and promoters of the idea were the non-nuclear Powers.

9. To recognize these facts and recall their origins is in no way incompatible with the principle of the acceptable balance which there must be between the mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers. Later we shall say how, in our opinion, this essential principle, recognized by the General Assembly (A/RES/2028(XX) (ENDC/161), is to be fulfilled. For the time being I merely wish to underline the incontrovertible fact, which sometimes seems to be forgotten, that non-proliferation is an objective which is of value in itself.

(Mr. Castañeda, Mexico)

10. This premise having been recalled, it is necessary to emphasize the inevitable and, moreover, logical and legitimate link that exists between non-proliferation and the imperative need to initiate the gradual atomic disarmament of the great Powers. Just as the non-nuclear countries, in giving up the right to possess atomic weapons, relieve the nuclear Powers of the risk of finding themselves indirectly involved in an atomic conflagration they do not wish for, so the non-nuclear countries have in their turn the right to see themselves relieved of the danger of a direct nuclear confrontation between the great Powers which would involve the whole world, a danger which is inherent in the arms race to a very high degree. How to reconcile and combine these two objectives in a just and feasible form is one of the most difficult problems to be resolved by the contemporary world.

11. Of course, to make horizontal proliferation conditional upon or subordinate to vertical proliferation, simultaneous or previous, is simply and purely equivalent in present conditions to opposing the achievement of a non-proliferation treaty. What the Assembly asked was that the treaty should be "a step towards ... disarmament" (ibid.), not an instrument that would already embody an agreement on disarmament. But conversely, a treaty which would result in institutionalizing and perpetuating the division of the world into nuclear and non-nuclear Powers could never be permanent and effective. Once it is signed, the nuclear Powers will have to agree immediately to a significant reduction in their armaments, especially their nuclear armaments, if they do not wish to see the entire structure of the treaty inevitably crumbling. All of us -- representatives of nuclear and non-nuclear Powers alike -- acknowledge this.

12. But how can it be put into practice? If we all acknowledge that the non-proliferation treaty must not be considered as an end in itself but rather as a means of starting the process of disarmament, there should be no objection to the inclusion in the treaty, as has been proposed by some non-aligned countries and ourselves, of an article containing two elements: firstly, the solemn acknowledgement and reaffirmation of the responsibility of the nuclear Powers vis-à-vis the world to adopt and implement a programme for the rapid reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles; and, secondly, the categorical laying down of this obligation. I think that a general formula such as the one I have just indicated would be preferable to a listing of more specific measures, since otherwise there would be the risk that some of them might favour one of the great Powers more than the other and that agreement on the listing would thus fail to come about. But I think that when the time comes a mere statement of this purpose and this intention in the preamble will not be sufficient and that they must be laid down as an explicit obligation.

(Mr. Castañeda, Mexico)

13. But even this is not enough. We must find an appropriate political instrument to exert pressure on the nuclear Powers so that they will comply with their obligation to go ahead with the disarmament process. Like the delegation of Sweden, we believe that an effective instrument would be an adequate clause on the right to withdraw from the treaty. It could be stated that if a State at the time of the first conference for the revision of the treaty considered that sufficient progress had not been made in disarmament, so that the purposes and obligations of the treaty remained unfulfilled, that State would be entitled to denounce the treaty. Even though the treaty would have less stability, a clause of this kind would serve not only as a warning to the great Powers but also as a stimulus to bring about agreement among them.

14. Now a few words on the problem of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe that in practice a State will never be faced with the dilemma of forgoing the benefits it would derive from carrying out an explosion for peaceful purposes, or deciding to violate the treaty in order to carry out such an explosion. Like Brazil, India and others, we believe that the developing countries would not be able to forgo carrying out in the future, when it is technically and economically possible, gigantic civil engineering works, such as excavation for canals and ports, by means of nuclear explosions. What we do not understand, however, is why such explosions have to be carried out precisely by the State concerned, with its own technical resources. The truth is that a great part of the industry and of the infrastructure works of the developing countries, and indeed of almost all countries, is carried out with imported technology. If most of the countries in the world import large dredges to excavate ports and canals, I do not see why they should not have to import the nuclear devices they would need for this purpose.

15. Obviously no country would agree to remain in a situation of such dependence upon others in this respect. But the best way to avoid it, in our opinion, would consist not so much in keeping open a costly and dangerous option--which in addition is purely theoretical--but rather in thoroughly exploring straightaway the whole gamut of possibilities offered by international co-operation. We sincerely believe that in reality no dilemma is posed. It will be possible to benefit from atomic explosions for peaceful purposes without proliferating nuclear weapons. As the

(Mr. Castañeda, Mexico)

delegation of Sweden has rightly pointed out, what will be forbidden under the treaty will be the manufacture of nuclear devices -- which at present cannot be distinguished from nuclear weapons -- but not their use in appropriate conditions of handling, control and perhaps international licensing (ENDC/PV.302, paras.18 et seq.)

16. As for the means, conditions and procedures for achieving this, it is still possible at present, as long as the terms of the problem are not narrowed excessively, to conceive of a large variety of formulae and possibilities. These tasks could be entrusted to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) -- either under its present statutes or possibly by enlarging its competence either alone or associated with another body. On the other hand, in view of the link between this matter and peace and security, one could also conceive of giving an essential role to a political organ of the United Nations, advised, of course, by the technical services of the Agency. One or more international organizations could be used, simply as clearing houses or as pools -- existing or potential -- for nuclear devices.

17. Finally, stress could be laid on the economic development aspects of nuclear explosions, and important though subsidiary roles could be given to appropriate international bodies. All these possible variations must be studied carefully, but certainly it is not impossible that agreement may be reached on an equitable international system for carrying out explosions which would not entail proliferation of atomic weapons and would be more economical, infinitely more economical, for the potential users.

18. The problem of peaceful explosions is one of those which have caused the most confusion and at the same time aroused the most concern. In spite of that, little study has been given to it, at least in intergovernmental circles. Up to now the differing positions have not crystallized to the point of preventing rational and objective examination. My delegation wonders, in these circumstances, whether it would not be desirable to hold, under the auspices of this Committee and at the appropriate time, meetings of specialists who would undertake a thorough examination of all the aspects of the problem.

19. Another matter which is perhaps even more important is that of the benefits of the peaceful application of nuclear technology. Some "quasi-nuclear" States have expressed the fear that in renouncing the right to carry out nuclear explosions they might be left in a situation of permanent disadvantage as regards atomic technology.

(Mr. Castañeda, Mexico)

We have not sufficient experience in this respect and would be unable to express a well-founded opinion. But we are very much impressed by the experience of Sweden and Canada, undoubtedly two of the States without nuclear weapons which have achieved a more advanced degree of nuclear technology. We understand that their decision not to manufacture atomic weapons has not affected to any important degree their research, development and production in the field of the technology of reactors and in other related fields. Their valuable testimony deserves our very careful reflection.

20. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the transmission of scientific knowledge in nuclear matters constitutes an essential problem of our times. But we are not sure that a non-proliferation treaty would be an obstacle to this scientific interchange; the signing of the treaty could even afford an unsuspected opportunity of reinforcing scientific co-operation to the benefit of the developing countries.

21. We gather that the authors of the draft treaty would agree to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear technology, including the technological spin-off resulting from the development of nuclear weapons and devices, being made available to all the parties for peaceful use; that they would agree that the parties should participate in the greatest possible interchange of scientific information on the progress made in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and that the potential benefits of any peaceful use of nuclear explosions should be made available to non-nuclear States, on a non-discriminatory basis, through adequate international procedures.

22. If these purposes are laid down as rights of the non-nuclear Powers and as definite obligations of the nuclear Powers, and if they are complied with fully and in good faith, we could find ourselves in the presence of a true revolution in the field of international relationships. As is only too well-known, historically the West has not been generous -- far from it -- in transmitting techniques to backward countries. For a long time they transmitted them in dribblets and always to their own advantage. For all practical purposes, the benefits of the first industrial revolution did not reach the large masses of the population in backward countries. Since the Second World War there has been a greater awareness of this problem. Numerous organizations and programmes are helping to provide technical assistance, but, basically, today still the so oft-repeated phrase to the effect that prosperity

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is indivisible is no more than the expression of an ideal and not of a fact. By this I mean that the rendering of financial and technical assistance still belongs to the sphere of ethics, of good sentiments, and that it has not yet been turned into a true juridical institution. Technical assistance programmes are financed with voluntary contributions; the right of some to receive and the obligation of others to share their scientific and technical knowledge has still not been officially established.

23. In connexion with the non-proliferation treaty the juridical obligation to share this knowledge could be established. If the non-nuclear countries forgo certain activities and experiments as a contribution to peace, it is only fair that in exchange they should receive, as an authentic right, the scientific and technical benefits that result from such experiments. If, as I said, this event comes about, it could be of a revolutionary nature. I believe that a timely and clear announcement of the intentions of the great Powers in this regard, and about how they think of putting them into practice, might help to dispel the justified doubts and misgivings of the non-nuclear Powers.

24. I could not deal with every one of the questions that interest my delegation without unduly prolonging this intervention. On the problem of security I will only say that we understand the position of India, that we sympathize with it and that we also think it essential that in the treaty itself the nuclear Powers should undertake not to use nuclear weapons, or threaten to use them, against States which do not possess such weapons and do not have them on their territories.

25. It seems to us that what is essential now is that the United States and the Soviet Union should redouble their efforts or rather, should make a supreme effort to save the treaty. If complete agreement is not possible, let it be at least partial. We also believe that an imperfect treaty is preferable to no treaty at all. What is essential in our opinion, is to establish the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in a treaty. And even though the value of such a treaty depends upon its quasi-universality, we believe that a treaty which at first a few States failed to sign is preferable, in the last analysis, to no treaty at all. We are still impelled by an urge, even though it gets weaker every day, which will perhaps enable us to reach port. Very soon it may perhaps be too late. Our concern is that the objections to the treaty that are floating in the air tend to become crystallized with every day that passes. Once this process has gone beyond a certain point, every effort will be useless.

(Mr. Castañeda, Mexico)

26. In our opinion, the non-nuclear countries have also a special responsibility. The main appeal of the treaty is directed at them. Its eventual existence depends partly on their will and this gives them an appreciable negotiating power. The non-nuclear Powers have the obligation to use this power with prudence, bearing in mind the interest of the international community. Of course, they can and must exert pressure so that the treaty will protect their interests. But they would hardly serve the cause of peace, if they carried this expression of legitimate aspirations beyond the point where it would be turned into a general argument against the treaty, into a negative attitude of renewed and systematic objections in regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

27. Mr. TRIVEDI (India): I do not intend to speak this morning about the very important statement made by the representative of Mexico. We shall all study it with the great care it deserves.

28. This morning I want to speak about a procedural point, or rather a point concerning the courtesy and good sense of the members of the Committee. We all know and realise that the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, a matter of the utmost importance, is of great and vital interest to all nations. Hence it is very necessary for all of us to exercise considerable restraint, good sense and courtesy.

29. As a result of the recent trend in all disarmament matters it is the entire international community which is now taking an interest in a successful outcome of our endeavours -- not only the experts and the ambassadors, the negotiators and the diplomats who are engaged in those endeavours, but also the peoples at large. The impact of our discussions and of discussions elsewhere on the peoples and parliaments of the world is of crucial and vital importance. What we say, therefore, has value for us because it enables us to understand each other's views, but it has also great value in this context of making a healthy impact upon the peoples and the representatives of the peoples in the world.

30. We know that newspaper representatives stand outside this Chamber before and after the Conference meets; they talk to some of us, and reports appear in various newspapers about discussions in the Committee. We have a very healthy and wholesome system of issuing a simple communiqué. I think that is right. If it was our

(Mr. Trivedi, India)

practice to give some "meat" in the communiqué we should probably waste much time in arriving at an agreed text on what each representative had said. So the system that we follow is right. At the same time, I think it is right that representatives and their deputies speak to representatives of the Press, but I would urge on the good sense and the courtesy of the members of this Committee that it is surely most undesirable for someone to tell the Press what another representative says in the Committee -- not to mention giving a wrong version of it or a wrong comment on it. It is perfectly legitimate for me or for my deputies to tell the Press what I said in the Committee, but I think it could be ungracious, to say the least, for me to say: "This is what Ambassador so and so said"; "It was a confused statement"; "This is what so and so said".

31. I think it behoves all of us not to speak about other people's statements. If any questions are put to me about what the representative of Mexico said this morning, for example, I shall tell the person who asks, "Please go and see the representative of Mexico or his deputy". We do not want any publicity ourselves. If we did want it, we would see to it ourselves; but I would appeal to the courtesy and good sense of the members of the Committee in asking them to ensure that they tell the Press only what their own representatives have said. I do not mean to say or imply that they have done anything wrong so far; I emphasize that I do not imply that at all. But I should like to make this point, by way of an appeal, that when talking to the Press it is gracious, polite and courteous only to mention what one's own representative has said.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 304th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador H. Khallaf, representative of the United Arab Republic.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Mexico and India.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 15 June 1967, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.